

Town of



AMHERST *Massachusetts*

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To: Stephanie O'Keeffe, Chair, Amherst Select Board
Members of the Amherst Select Board

From: Laurence Shaffer, Town Manager

Re: Emergency Management Preparedness

Date: December 31, 2008

Over the last two years, Town of Amherst staff has devoted significant resources to the improvement of the town's ability to effectively manage an emergency. This memo will serve as a summary of those efforts.

In 2006, the Town of Amherst did not have an adequate emergency management plan nor an identified procedure for review and update of that plan. One of my earliest goals was to provide the time and resources needed to create an emergency management plan, to test that plan and to provide direction as to what resources might be secured to improve upon the administration of the emergency management plan. To date, the following has been accomplished:

- Mike Zlogar, Assistant Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director was assigned the exclusive responsibility to create a new emergency management plan (EMP). He was asked to set aside his other considerable duties and to focus upon the completion of the EMP. The EMP has been created and is substantially complete.
- The EMP was tested twice through table top exercises and the problems were identified and resolved. The Emergency Operations Center at the Police Department was also utilized twice over the last year, once in an exercise and once with an actual opening.
- The Reverse 911 system was purchased and used twice, once as an exercise and once during the water quality event that occurred in 2008.
- David Ziomek was appointed the Public Information Officer. His knowledge of the community and his familiar community name will be an important asset during an emergency.
- A table top exercise with the University, local communities, state and regional emergency management teams was conducted in the fall of 2008. That exercise utilized the Incident

Command System in conjunction with the Emergency Management System. This large scale exercise was the first conducted in the last five years.

- Training in the Incident Management Team System was conducted. Lieutenant O'Connor, Amherst Police Department, Jason Skeels, Town Engineer, Assistant Chief Stromgren and Assistant Chief Zlogar attended this five day seminar in New Hampshire in 2008. The seminar was sponsored by FEMA.
- The Health Department has taken the lead in planning for mass vaccination in the event of a terrorist act or the breakout of a worldwide flu epidemic. That planning has been done in close coordination with the Five College Consortium.
- Assistant Chief Zlogar is working with Roy Rosenblatt on a shelter management program.

The following objectives have been identified for the next year:

- 1. Provide additional training for all aspects of emergency management**
- 2. Conduct a full day long table top exercise**
- 3. Improve the sheltering capabilities**
- 4. Develop a resource data base**

I look forward to answering any questions that the Select Board may have.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Phases of an Emergency

Initiation (awareness) Phase

1. Executive
 - 1.1. Town Manager
 - 1.2. Emergency Management Director
 - 1.3. Key Department Heads
2. Event Assessment
 - 2.1. Determine the type, size and duration of event
 - 2.2. Identify expected impacts
3. Schedule pre-event planning meeting
 - 3.1. Notify departments and agencies

During Initial Operations or Pre-Event Planning

1. Assemble IMT to develop IAP
 - 1.1. Town Manager
 - 1.2. Emergency Management Director
 - 1.3. Police Chief
 - 1.4. Fire Chief
 - 1.5. Public Works Superintendent
 - 1.6. Other departments and Agencies based on type of event
2. Situation Status Report
 - 2.1. Determine the type, size and duration of event
3. Identify expected impacts
4. Identify strategic objectives for a successful outcome
5. Create a strategic plan for the event
 - 5.1. Determine operational objectives
 - 5.2. Determine scope of operations
 - 5.3. Level of Response
 - 5.4. Agencies and Departments to be mobilized
6. Assign Operation Units
 - 6.1. Development of tactical plans

Mobilization Phase

1. Open Emergency Operations Center
 - 1.1. Select Primary or Secondary Center
 - 1.2. Logistics and Support Personnel report
2. Active the Incident Management Team
 - 2.1. Town Manager
 - 2.2. Emergency Management Director
 - 2.3. Fire Department
 - 2.4. Police Department
 - 2.5. Public Works Department
 - 2.6. Emergency Medical Services
 - 2.7. Communications (Dispatch) Center
 - 2.8. Public Information Officer
3. Provide required resources and services
4. Mobilize as needed

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Phases of an Emergency

- 4.1. Board of Health
- 4.2. Community Services Coordinator
- 4.3. School Department
- 4.4. Building Commissioner and Inspectors, Electrical, Plumbing, Health, Housing
- 4.5. Town Engineer or Consulting Engineers
- 4.6. Planning, Finance and other departments
- 4.7. Staff and other support
- 4.8. Business representatives

Operational Periods

1. Public information
 - 1.1. Public Service Announcements (warnings and instructions)
 - 1.2. News releases and Situation status updates
2. Operations are under the direction of incident commanders in the field
3. IAP (strategic plan) continuously updated
4. Continuous resource assessments
5. Support and Communications
6. Finance and Documentation
7. Declaration of State of Emergency

Recovery Phase

1. Damage assessment
 - 1.1. Appoint Assessment coordinator
 - 1.2. Inspection of damaged area and facilities
 - 1.3. Compile damage assessment data and reports
2. Incident Action Plans
 - 2.1. Restore vital services
 - 2.2. Provide for the needs of public
 - 2.3. Restore community to pre-disaster status (long term)
3. Applications for relief funds

Proposal for a Local Incident Management Team

The Town's emergency plan should provide the structure and framework necessary to effectively manage a planned event or emergency incident that will have a significant impact on the town and its citizens. The plan should include a system to assess the severity of the incident and forecast the potential development and increase of damage. The plan should provide the structure and framework to effectively develop plans to minimize the impact, manage the response and effect recovery to pre-event status.

The emergency plan and emergency management system should provide strategic planning and general supervision of the incident and not directly manage the operational units. The system should not micromanage the operational units. Police, Fire, EMS, Public Works, Health and other responders know their jobs and do them well. The system should make their jobs easier, safer and possibly more cost effective. The system should ensure the effective use of resources, avoid duplication and unnecessary work. The system must be flexible to meet changing the conditions of an ongoing incident.

The establishment of a local Incident Management Team is the best method to meet the needs of emergency incidents that could have a significant impact on the Town and its citizens.

Current Situation

Much of the emergency planning efforts seem to be driven by meeting the legal requirements and mandatory reporting to maintain the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) with Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). The CEMP is an inventory of features and resources in a standard format used by all communities in the Commonwealth. The CEMP was first created to address hazardous materials incidents and is now expanding to be an all hazards plan. The CEMP now includes annexes that address specific types of incidents (tornado, hurricane, flood, dam breach etc) but these are in a generic format. The CEMP and its annexes do not contain sufficient detail to be useable as an operational plan. The resource information is not well organized and is not in a format that is easily retrievable in the time frame needed during emergency operations.

The CEMP does contain valuable information in a format that meets the needs of the State and Federal mission.

When faced with an incident of significance, will we respond to or manage the incident?

Too often when the a disaster occurs, an general call for additional help is broadcast, responders gather and do what needs to be done. Sometimes there is an expectation that state and federal agencies will take responsibility. Although authority may be delegated to another agency for incident management, local officials are still responsible for setting the situation parameters and desired results of control efforts.

Responding to (rather than managing) an incident is analogous to a sport team approaching a game with the attitude that we are competent players; we will take the field, see what the opponent throws at us and react accordingly. The job gets done, but is it done well, effectively and safely?

A managed incident starts with the initial response. Command is established and the first IAP developed which will include a situation and risk assessment, goals for control and a successful outcome. For a complex or incident of long duration, command of the initial response makes a

Proposal for a Local Incident Management Team

situation status report to the IMT. The IMT develops strategies to achieve the goals that achieve a successful outcome. An organization is created, roles, responsibilities and assignments are made and resources are procured based on the strategies and control objectives.

Benefit of a Local IMT

We cannot know definitively what an event will be and what impacts it will have on the community. The IMT provides an emergency management system that is flexible to meet the needs of different hazards and changing situations. The IMT provides the Command and General Staff functions of the Incident Command System (ICS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the nationally standard for incident management.

The Incident Command System is based on the principles of organization and management. This common structure provides the ability to size the organization to the needs of the incident and to integrate outside management resources to an ongoing incident.

The IMT is necessary to manage large, complex, multi-agency incidents and incidents long duration. We rarely experience complex incidents and incidents of multiple operational periods. These low frequency/high risk incidents present an enormous challenge to the incident managers and Town officials. A trained IMT will be prepared to meet those challenges.

The IMT works in support of operational units. Considerable effort is directed at creating the Incident Action Plan and to procuring resources (personnel, equipment, supplies) and to organize and deploy to those resources to accomplish incident objectives.

The IMT develops an Incident Action Plan (IAP) for each operational period. The IAP is a document that provides the communication, coordination, and support for operational units. The IMT projects the likely course of an incident and develops planned actions to meet the future incident requirements.

Command is responsibility of the Town unless delegated to another agency or another IMT. IMTs are normally available from regional, state or federal agencies. The state has started to create an IMT but the team is not at operational status. Federal IMTs may be available if the incident is large enough. An outside team will require at least 8 hours for mobilization and could take several days for a federal team. Until a transfer of command and delegation of authority is executed, management of the incident remains the responsibility of the Town.

Creating the Local IMT

Once the commitment to maintain an IMT for local incidents, an implementation plan would be created to appoint, train and staff. Facilities and equipment to support the operation would be developed. The team would benefit from deployments to events other than emergencies that would provide the opportunity to gain experience with the ICS.

- Appoint Staff to the Command and General Staff position of the ICS.

At the local IMT level all the positions may not be necessary. Key positions (Incident Commander, Public Information Officer, Logistics Section Chief, Finance Section Chief, Planning Section Chief and Operations Section Chief) that create the base for expansion of the ICS are required.

Proposal for a Local Incident Management Team

Appointment of leaders for the subordinate units should be considered to develop expertise in these areas.

Planning Section: Situation, Documentation and Resource Units

Logistics Section: Service Branch, Communications Units, and Support Branch.

Finance Section: Procurement and Cost Units.

Consideration must be given that the individuals appointed to the IMT positions will not compromise capability of responding departments and operational units.

- Training of the staff is important. Team members must complete the fundamental ICS/NIMS courses and position specific training.

In addition to the courses, tabletop exercises and mobilizations provide valuable experience.

- Resources

Personnel, equipment and supplies are essential for any operation. The resource information contained in the CEMP is inadequate for incident management. An inventory of all resources and mobilization information in a database format would be most manageable.

Creating and maintaining a database of resources for all-hazard incident response is a large task. FEMA and MEMA use emergency support functions (ESF) for inventory and mobilization of resources. Using the ESFs to inventory resources allows the assignment of a coordinator who is familiar with that function. The task of maintaining the inventory will be easier when done by someone familiar with the function (Health Director as coordinator for ESF 8 Health). The coordinator will have the opportunity to establish relationships with other agencies, contractor and vendors that will be key to mobilizing resources.

Using the ESFs for inventory and mobilization will establish and maintain common terminology for interfacing with MEMA or FEMA when requesting assistance.

- Facilities

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) layout and equipment should be configured to support the ICS organization. It is possible that some of the work could be conducted at sites separate from the space at the Police Facility.

The facilities, equipment and supplies necessary to carry out ICS functions should be evaluated and facility setup and use plan developed.

- Continued Development of Capability

The IMT should meet monthly to engage in planning for planned events and incidents. The planning will be scenario based. Using the Tabletop Exercise model, the members of the team will work in the roles of their assignment. Through the exercise the team members will gain experience that will enable them to more effectively meet their responsibilities for actual incident. The sessions will help to develop the equipment and facilities needed to most effectively manage an incident.

The IMT should be used to build capability. The team should be employed to develop plans for planned events and incidents that may not require this level of management, but that will provide "on the job" training and experience.

TOWN OF AMHERST EOC

Table of Organization



